



City of Madison News Release

For Immediate Release:

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Informational Website Link:

www.eatright.org/nnm, www.cacscw.org/gardens.php

Healthy Foods Easier to Choose *Local Programs Offer Support*

Between fast food, sugary sodas, candy bars and all the other easy-to-get temptations available to satisfy our passing hunger pangs, eating "right" is not always the easiest option. The folks at The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics remind us that March is National Nutrition Month®, and point out that there's no one-size-fits-all way to eat. Healthy eating boils down to making a food plan that fits your unique nutritional needs and tastes. The Academy's National Nutrition Month website (below) includes a variety of helpful tips, games, promotional tools and nutrition education resources to help guide you through this process.

In Madison and Dane County we have a number of resources available that make choosing healthier foods easier. For example, an innovative program called the Fresh Mobile brings fruits, vegetables, dairy, and other healthy alternatives to neighborhoods that do not have easy access to full service super markets. The Fresh Mobile is run by Fresh Madison Market's Jeff Maurer. Fresh Mobile stops in eight different neighborhoods in Dane County. A current schedule of stops can be found at their website (below).

If you are interested in growing some of your own veggies, there are a large number of community gardens that offer individuals and families, small plots where they can grow and harvest their own healthy food. The area has over 50 community gardens. Communities often find that fruits and vegetables are not the only thing to grow in the gardens. These gardens also cultivate relationships, community beautification, leadership and self reliance. More information about the area's community gardens can be found at the Community Action Coalition's website (below).

Thanks to a grant from the Madison Community Foundation, area children will have garden-based classes as part of their school day. The Madison Metropolitan School District and the GROW Coalition now have the opportunity to integrate garden-based learning into 15 model schools over 3 years. The goal of these model schools is to demonstrate the ability of gardens to increase student achievement, nurture healthy lifestyles and build community partnerships. More information about the project can be found at the GROW website (below).

Community Supported Agriculture or CSAs are an innovative way to get access to fresh veggies throughout the growing season. When you buy a CSA share, it is like buying a subscription from a farmer who will deliver a carton of fresh picked veggies every week. Most CSAs run for about 20 weeks from June to October. A variety of farms, CSA sizes, and payment options are available including Partner Shares. Partner Shares is a cost-sharing program that provides financial assistance for the purchase of CSA shares to qualifying families. Additionally, some health insurance companies will reimburse up to \$200 for a CSA share. Information about CSAs and various payment forms can be found at the CSA Coalition website (below).

The Market Basket Program provides a more focused approach to CSA-style food distribution programs. Its goal is to connect urban consumers with small-scale farm operations and offers a wide variety of fresh food options at a very low cost. A weekly basket of fresh produce for a family of four is under \$20 and subscribers can use food stamps or WIC vouchers towards the cost.

According to Lesly Scott, Public Health-Madison and Dane County's (PHMDC) WIC Director, "Everyone deserves a chance to eat healthy, nutritious foods that are affordable and culturally appropriate right from the start. We are encouraged that local groups are providing access to local foods and a variety of options for residents of Dane County."

When it comes to eating healthy, PHMDC's Jeannine Bindl, RD CD says; "eating healthfully looks different for each person. Start by creating a couple of good habits; they will become second nature. With a few good eating habits established, you can choose a couple of new goals and be well on your way to a healthier life."

For more information on healthy eating and the programs described above:

National Nutrition Month website

www.eatright.org/nnm

Community Action Coalition's website

www.cacscw.org/gardens.php

Fresh Mobile

www.marketonwheels.com/schedule.html

GROW website

<http://growmadison.net/>

CSA Information

www.csacoalition.org/

The South Madison Farmer's Market <http://www.southmadisonfarmersmarket.com/>

Market Basket Program

Contact them via email at info@growingpowermadison.org for more information.

Meal ideas:

www.choosemyplate.gov

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